



# DESE

Missouri  
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION™

## FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

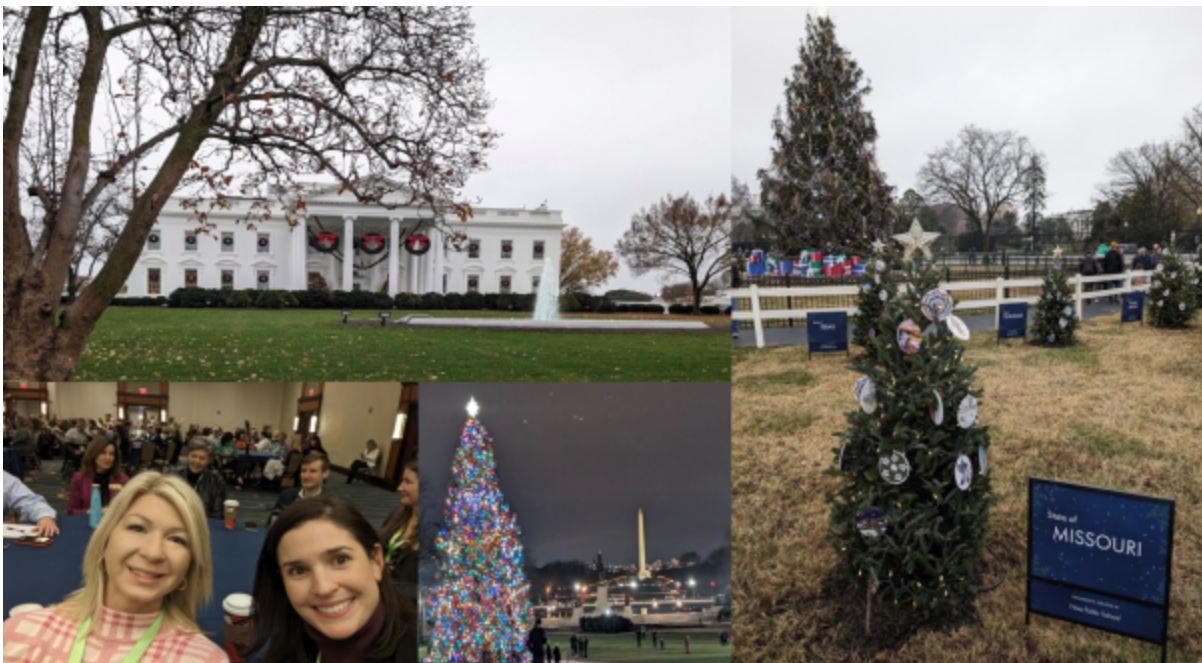
January 5, 2024

### December USDA State Agency Meeting - Washington, DC

In December, FNS team members Barbara Shaw, Coordinator, and Claudia Vincent, School Nutrition Program Manager, attended the USDA State Agency Meeting in Washington, DC. DC was decked out for the holidays, including the State of Missouri Christmas tree which was decorated by students from the Nixa school district! The USDA State Agency Meeting provided guidance and clarification in School Nutrition Program areas, especially the new Integrity Rule that is rolling out. The meeting also gave an opportunity to network with other state's FNS Coordinators and Directors to learn best practices and helpful methods to improve communication and program participation. This visit was an excellent way to close out the year and bring in the new.

Highlighted presentations from the USDA State Agency Meeting can be found on the **Best Practices, Tips, & Recipes page of the DESE-FNS website.**

*Clockwise from top left: The White House, the National Christmas Tree with the State of Missouri tree, Washington Monument, Barbara and Claudia at the USDA State Agency meeting.*



### Farm to School Grant Opportunities

Through the **Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS)**, the Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) will provide a funding opportunity for schools to serve locally grown foods and beverages to

children through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. These products will be healthy and unique to their geographic area, with the goal of improving child nutrition and building new relationships between schools and local farmers.

Through LFS, DESE will encourage urban and rural schools to apply for funding to promote purchases of local foods for school meal trays and foster proper health and safety habits. This program will create an opportunity for underserved farmers to promote and grow their business as well as create a relationship between schools and local agricultural communities.

The LFS grant is open now, watch the [training video](#) and [click here to apply](#). LEAs must complete the application and email the written plan to [Barbara.Shaw@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Barbara.Shaw@dese.mo.gov)



The FY 2024 **USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant** Request for Applications (RFA) is now available [here](#)!

**Applications are due by 11:59pm ET on January 12th, 2024!**

USDA seeks to award up to \$12 million to expand access to local food in eligible schools. Applicants may apply for grants of up to \$100,000 in one of five grant tracks.

Schools and school districts, CACFP and Summer sponsors, Indian tribal organizations, State agencies, local agencies, non-profit organizations, and agricultural producers are encouraged to apply. State agencies, Indian tribal organizations, or other eligible organizations proposing projects that are multi-state or national in scope may apply for up to \$500,000.

USDA hosted two webinars that have recordings available [HERE](#) to help interested applicants learn more about the RFA and how to apply.

Please contact [sm.fn.farmtoschool@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fn.farmtoschool@usda.gov) and Grant Officer Anna Arrowsmith at [Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov](mailto:Anna.Arrowsmith@usda.gov) with any questions related to this grant or RFA (and feel free to Cc the Mountain Plains Office at [sm.fn.mpro.f2s@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fn.mpro.f2s@usda.gov)).

This New final rule was effective 10/26/2023 [review powerpoint slides here](#).

The new rule lowers the minimum identified student percentage (ISP) from 40 percent to 25 percent.

Here is a list of [Eligible and Near Eligible LEA's](#) (schools with an ISP of 25%-39%). These schools would be newly eligible under the new final rule.

This creates a greater flexibility to offer no-cost meals to all enrolled students if financially viable to the school district.

**If there are LEAs interested in electing CEP for this school year, DESE may request a waiver, from USDA, to allow LEAs to take advantage of the new minimum ISP during SY 23-24, and implement CEP mid-year.**

**Schools should make these following considerations:**

- CEP does remove administrative burdens such as distributing and approving free or reduced-price applications, verifying applications, collecting lunch money from students and counting meals by eligibility
- If the ISP does not yield 100 percent free claiming percentage then it is very essential to ensure financial viability to cover the difference in meals not able to be claimed at the free rate
- FRL percentages used for formula calculation
- LEAs should use the [CEP calculator](#) tool to determine the financial impact

**Contact Food and Nutrition Services by phone or email:**

**Brittany Otto:** 573-751-7664

**Main Phone:** 573-751-8673

**Email:** [Brittany.Otto@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Brittany.Otto@dese.mo.gov)

**Cc:** [Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov), [Becky.hart@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Becky.hart@dese.mo.gov)  
and [foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov](mailto:foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov)

### Reminders and Important Information

#### Verification Report

Please note that the Verification Report was due to be complete as of December 15. **If you have not yet completed this report, the report is now past due.** Please complete the report immediately. If you have not yet completed the Verification process, please do so immediately. For guidance on the verification Report, please review the [Verification Report Guidance](#).

As a reminder the verification process is due to be completed by November 15 annually. If a family was notified of their selection for verification and has failed to provide documentation by the due date provided, they must be changed to full pay and notified of the change. This will complete the verification process. For a refresher on the verification process please view our [Verification Step-by-Step Summary](#).

This report is required for all LEAs participating in the National School Lunch Program. Incompletion of this report may lead to withholding of future payments of reimbursement. If you require further assistance, please reach out to your regional Nutrition Program Specialist. To identify your Specialist, please use the [Map](#) and [Contact Information](#).

### **Food Service Management Contract (FSMC) Renewals**

Schools contracting with a FSMC company must submit signed renewal forms showing the renewal for school year 2023-2024 to our office each year. Email forms to [Kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov) and Cc: [Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov).

Schools contracting with a FSMC company must complete an **On-site Monitoring** and complete the **On-site Monitoring form** each year. The completed monitoring form must be submitted to our office or again attached to the FSMC application in the SNP application packet. The monitoring form is due to DESE no later than **December 15** each year. You may also email the form to [Kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Kyle.heislen@dese.mo.gov) and Cc: [Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov).

### **Procurement Review Information**

Please note that there is an updated Code of Conduct on our website. This can be found at **Procurement Review Information | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (mo.gov)** LEA's need to update specifics on the bottom of the page highlighted in yellow.

### **Food and Nutrition Services Updated Contact Information**

We have recently updated documents which include DESE, Food and Nutrition Services Staff contact information. Please save these and update your records so that you will be able to reach us by phone or email.

- **Food and Nutrition Services Contact Information**
- **Food and Nutrition Services Region Map**

**The DESE Food and Nutrition Services main contact number has temporarily been changed to a new number for LEAs calling the main line. Effective immediately when contacting the FNS main office, dial 573-751-8673.**

The old, 573-751-3526 line is still active, but has recently been experiencing a high volume of calls from families concerning the Pandemic Eligibility Benefits Program (P-EBT). The best mechanism for our office to continue to address P-EBT calls was to create a phone line specific for these callers.

## **Let's Talk Tuesday - Upcoming Webinar**

**Join us for an upcoming  
Let's Talk Tuesday webinar!**

**Tuesday  
January 16th  
2-3pm CST**

An email will be sent out the morning prior to each LEAs Authorized Representative on file. The email will include the link required to access the webinar.

As always, the webinar will be recorded and posted at a later date for those that are not able to attend the live release. We



look forward to hosting these trainings for all of you.



### Applications Open for Innovation and Partnership in Rural School Food Systems

As part of the USDA's Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative (HMI), funding and learning support is now available for a cohort of up to 35 rural school food authorities (SFAs) across the nation.

Project SCALES (Supporting Community Agriculture and Local Education Systems) will work with SFAs over a two-year period as they build partnerships for innovative solutions to increase local procurement in their school meal programs. The **Center for School and Community Partnerships** at Boise State University will provide a subgrant (up to \$150,000) for each SFA, with technical assistance including a learning community provided by the experts at **LunchAssist**.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.projectscales.com](http://www.projectscales.com)

**The online application portal is open and the deadline for submitting applications is 11:59 ET on January 26, 2024.**

Is your SFA eligible to apply? These are the eligibility criteria:

- Rural school districts/SFAs (those with a locale code of 41, 42, or 43 according to the National Center for Education Statistics; click [here](#) to check their online tool).
- Participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.
- SFAs that provide meals for charter schools and groups of non-profit private schools are also eligible to apply. If you have questions about eligibility please email us at [info@projectscales.com](mailto:info@projectscales.com).



SCALES

Supporting Community Agriculture  
& Local Education Systems

apply by  
Jan  
**26**  
2024

## Applications are open!

### School Food System Transformation Grants

As part of the USDA's Healthy Meals Incentives Initiative, funding and learning support is now available for a cohort of up to 35 rural school food authorities (SFAs) across the nation.

SCALES will work with SFA directors over a two-year period as they build partnerships for innovative solutions to increase local procurement in their school meal programs. The Center for School and Community Partnerships at Boise State University will provide a grant (up to \$150,000) for each SFA, with technical assistance and a learning community provided by the experts at LunchAssist.

Project SCALES is led by Boise State University, in partnership with LunchAssist.  
Learn more at [www.projectscales.com](http://www.projectscales.com)



Project SCALES is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

## USDA Foods Update

**24/25 USDA Foods Packet** - We are putting final touches on the USDA Foods Packet and plan to publish it **Tuesday, January 9th**. We have included some new tools with it to assist districts as you complete the packet. Please join our LET'S TALK TUESDAY on January 16th for more information on "Unwrapping the Packet". You can find the save the date and additional details above under the Let's Talk Tuesday Heading.

**Upcoming Missouri Commodity Foods Expos**  
**Don't Forget to Register! Walk ins are also welcomed!**

- **St. Louis – January 31, 2024**

**CLICK HERE to register for ST. LOUIS 2024 SFNDA/ISBE/MO-DESE  
SFNDA/ISBE/MO-DESE Commodity Expo and Food Show**  
**Orlando Banquet Hall**  
2050 Dorsett Village Plaza  
Maryland Heights, MO 63034

- **Kansas City – February 7, 2024**

**CLICK HERE to register for Kansas City 2024 HOA/SNA-KS/MO-DESE**

**Commodity Expo and Food Show**

**KCI Expo Center**

11730 N Ambassador Dr.

Kansas City, MO 64153

**Let's Talk Tuesday – Commodity 101, February 13th**

We are offering a webinar version of our Commodity 101 class featured during our Commodity Expos. This session will provide step by step guidance and helpful tips on completing the 24/25 USDA Foods Packet. This session is great for new directors as well as anyone that would like to learn more about the USDA Foods Packet and tools available to assist with managing it. There is also our 23/24 Commodity 101 session posted on our USDA Foods webpage <https://vimeo.com/799989736/c86cb38969>

**24/25 Entitlement** - Entitlement for the 24/25 SY will be lower than the 23/24 SY. This is based on the "Total Lunches Served" for 22/23 SY which were decreased from 21/22 SY when the Seamless Summer Option was available for all districts. As you begin to consider processing options for next year, please place entitlement dollars where they will be most impactful to your students and your program. Do not depend on Bonus entitlement as it will be limited, and do continue to take advantage of the Bonus entitlement available this year.

**NOI Bonus** – Bonus entitlement is still available. Please reach out to each processor for specific information on pounds available.

**DOD Bonus** - Bonus entitlement is still available. Please contact us at [donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov](mailto:donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov) to request additional dollars.

**Direct Delivery (Brown Box) Bonus** - Advertisements have just been posted on our Gold Star webpage. There are over 25 different products currently available as Bonus and more will be added throughout the month of January. Please check the website often and request only the amount you can immediately receive and store. Bonus items must be added to your next scheduled Gold Star delivery.

To request bonus items, log in on the [Gold Star website](#). On the left panel, click on Advertisements under the USDA Direct Delivery Header. Then request the items you would like. Districts that have direct delivery items they will not be able to utilize may use this feature to "advertise" the items to other districts. Any items advertised and not requested within 2 months, must be placed on delivery and accepted by the district advertising the item. More information and instructions on this advertisement feature can be found on the USDA Foods website under Gold Star Training Videos – Advertisements <https://youtu.be/FcpbOTCKHAQ>

**Diced Peaches 100220** – USDA originally cancelled all truckloads of diced peaches for January – April deliveries. In December, our USDA Team was given an additional opportunity to purchase truckloads for delivery in mid-January. We are awaiting confirmation that they have been purchased. If they are purchased we will be able to fulfill all orders for January through April that were originally cancelled.

**Peanut Butter has Arrived** - Missouri has received our first truckload of peanut butter. Review your Gold Star Live Inventory to place it on order. The second truckload of peanut butter has been canceled. Please check the [Cancelled and Adjusted List](#) on our USDA webpage.



## Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; email [civilrights@dese.mo.gov](mailto:civilrights@dese.mo.gov).

This email was sent to

Please add to your address book to ensure our emails reach your inbox! If you'd rather not receive emails:  
[Unsubscribe](#) | [Report Spam](#)

© Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65101